of Forest Guards in the Wildlife Wing of various States. In certain State the percentage of vacancies is as high as 30%. Such a situation is not congenial to effective protection of wildlife and its habitat.

(b) Prime Minister of India has written a letter to the Chief Ministers of all the States to fill the vacant posts in the Forest Department on priority basis.

(c) and (d) Last year it was brought to the notice of the Ministry of Environment & Forests that the Forest Guards in Valmrk Tiger Reserve have not been paid their salary for several months. The matter was taken up with the State Government and the crises was not resolved.

Non-Availability of Bt. Cotton Seeds in Punjab

4717. SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that great uncertainty is prevailing amongst the farmers of Punjab over non-availability of genetically modified Bt. Cotton seeds during the current (April-May) sowing season in the State, as reported in the Tribune dated 11th April, 2002 (Punjabi Edition);

(b) whether it is a fact that scientists of I.C.A.R. have not been able so far to carry out final trial of suitability of above mentioned seeds in North Indian States, because of non-availability thereof to them; and

(c) if so, what is the present status of availability of Bt. Cotton seeds to farmers of Punjab and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONEMNT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (c) Out of the four Bt. cotton hybrids developed by Maharashtra Hybrid Seed Company (MAHYCO), the trials of MECH 915 vaiiety, which is more suitable for Northern States is one season behind the other three varieties because of its early sowing requirement. The Indian Council of Agricultural Research

(ICAR) have planned to undertake trials of MECH 915 Bt. cotton hybrid through its All India Coordinated Cotton Improvement Project, in nine locations this year.

Garbage Refinery

4718. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) Whether Japan has set up its first garbage refinery at Chiba, to process 300 Tons garbage a day;

(b) Whether the Japan Waste Management Association has confirmed the success of the pilot plant in refining treating household garbage;

(c) Whether the plant has been designed to gasify the waste matter and re-use it as a resource, unlike conventional incinerators; and

(d) Whether this technology was developed by Thermoselect a Swiss company; if so, whether India would seek assistance in setting up such plants in the country?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (d) It has been reported that a waste processing plant based on Thermoselect gasification technology at 'Kawasaki Steel's Chiba Steel Works in Japan has been completed. The plant comprises two units and each has a processing capacity of 150 tons as day. The facility at Chiba has been set up by Thermoselect, a Swiss company.

Environmental Clearance for Mumbai Trans Harbour Sea Link Project

4719. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any proposal for environmenta' clearance and No Objection Certificates for Mumbai Trans Harbour Sea Link Project and Western Freeway Sea Link, from Worli io Nariman Point, during the last one year; and